



Want to Make Money from Your Music? Be Passive

BY

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What good is your music if no one hears it? And what good is talent if no one sees it? You began playing to get seen and heard. You went into this business to make money. At no other time in history has the creative had so much control over his or her professional destiny.

Here are five ways performing pays:

1. Become a hometown headliner at local venues[MKC1]
2. DIY tours
3. Public and private gigs
4. Busking
5. Royalties

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In these five posts, we dive into each of these income streams to see how others have done it and are doing it. If you have something to say, please join the conversation and tell us how you're doing it. [Artist promotion](#) isn't that difficult if you think outside the box a little.

Performance Royalties: Awesome Passive Income

A decent song can earn decent passive income if you're willing to put in a little post-song legwork. How? Royalties. You've probably heard about them, but if you're new to the biz you may not know the in and outs.

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In very basic terms, a royalty is income received from other people's use of your creative work. In this post we're talking about performance royalties, which are royalties a songwriter receives whenever his or song is broadcast or performed in public.

If you've written a song, you are entitled to royalties if your song is played

- On satellite radio (like Sirius)
- On Internet radio (like Party Vibe)
- On online music streaming platforms (like Spotify)
- On network or cable TV shows, movies, commercials and or online games (These fall under synchronization rights)
- In a live performance (in which case songwriters can collect two-for-one royalties—one for writing and one for performance)

So How Do I Collect Royalties?

Your first step is to [copyright your song](#). Technically, you're protected once you write the last note and lyric. But just to be safe, send either a rough recording or written form of the song to the Copyright Office. Doing so will protect you from creative thievery and allow you to reproduce and perform it.

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Next, you want to register with a PRO, or Performance Rights Organization (ASCAP BMI or SESAC). These are the people who will ensure you get paid. They issue licenses to those who play your music—bars, radio stations, you name it. It's a nominal fee to join and they dole out the royalties based on formulas that are way beyond the scope of this article. And songwriters can only join one. But they're pretty good at what they do. It's how the pros get paid. You'll also want to register with [SoundExchange](#) to collect your Internet royalties.

Now you can also hook up with a publisher. You'll have to split your royalties with them, but [there are some advantages to doing so](#). The [royalty/licensing biz is complicated](#) and may require some study on your part. If paperwork isn't your thing, you may want to at least consider partnering with a publisher. But if you're a DIY artist, you can deal with the PROs yourself and keep all the royalties (minus PRO fees) to yourself.

Whichever way you choose to go, I wish you the best of luck. And if you want more info on [how to upload your music online](#), Machus Media is happy to help.

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As CEO of Machus Corporation, James Ussery has navigated the Internet frontier for nearly 30 years. He's gone from websites, to massive international white label online marketing, and now Machus Media, a stop for musicians & authors to promote digital work via the Internet and social media. For more information Please Visit

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